

Message Text

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72

ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-11 FMC-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 PM-07 H-03

L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19

DRC-01 /147 W

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R 191740Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3980

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION NATO

USOECN PARIS 521

USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

NISRA/KEFLAVIK

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1111

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR IC UK

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: RELATIONS WITH BRITISH

REF: REYKJAVIK 1095

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOI CABINET, MEETING SEPT 18, FAILED TO REACH DECISION ON BRITISH PROPOSAL TO APPOINT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH FAULT IN SHIP COLLISIONS. DURING TV DISCUSSION EVENING SEPTEMBER 18, FONMIN REAFFIRMED THAT NEXT UNCLASSIFIED

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RAMMING INCIDENT BY BRITISH WARSHIP WOULD RESULT IN

CLOSING OF BRITISH EMBASSY, DEPARTURE OF DIPLOMATIC STAFF
BUT RETENTION OF CONSULAR RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. GOI CABINET MEETING SEPTEMBER 18 FAILED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON HANDING OF BRITISH PROPOSAL (REPORTED REFTEL) TO APPOINT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO ATTEMPT TO FIX BLAME IN INCIDENTS INVOLVING COLLISIONS BETWEEN BRITISH WARSHIPS AND ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VESSELS. FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON TOLD PRESS THAT MATTER WOULD BE DISCUSSED AGAIN BY CABINET AND THAT GOI REPLY "WOULD BE AVAILABLE SOON." HE ADDED THAT QUESTION WOULD ALSO BE REFERRED TO ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

3. ICELANDIC NATIONAL TV PRESENTED DISCUSSION PROGRAM EVENING SEPTEMBER 18 CONCERNING QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH BRITISH. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON, FISHERIES MINISTER LUDVIK JOSEFSSON, EDUCATION MINISTER MAGNUS TORFI OLAFSSON, INDEPENDENCE PARTY ALTHING MEMBER MATTHIAS MATHIESEN AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIRMAN GYLFI GISLASON. FONMIN STATED THAT HE AGREED WITH RECENT DECISION TAKEN BY CABINET REGARDING SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITISH. HE SAID THAT AFTER NEXT RAMMING INCIDENT BRITISH EMBASSY IN REYKJAVIK WOULD BE CLOSED AND DIPLOMATIC STAFF ASKED TO LEAVE. HE INDICATED THAT SECOND STAGE IN TERMINATING RELATIONS WAS TO SEVER CONSULAR RELATIONS AS WELL. HE SAID THAT THE CABINET HAD DECIDED ONLY ON THE FIRST MEASURE (THIS DOES NOT CLARIFY SITUATION SINCE MOST OF BRITISH DIPLOMATIC STAFF ALSO HOLD CONSULAR EXEQUATURS.)

4. FISHERIES MINISTER JOSEFSSON STATED THAT INTENSIFIED BRITISH MEASURES WHICH RESULTED IN LOSS OF LIFE NECESSITATED DRASTIC COUNTER MEASURES SUCH AS SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE ALSO SAID HE PERSONALLY OPPOSED BRITISH PROPOSAL TO APPOINT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO PLACE BLAME IN COLLISION INCIDENTS. MINISTER OLAFSSON WAS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH JOSEFSSON.

5. MATHIESEN SAID SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WAS SERIOUS MATTER AND TANTAMOUNT TO DECLARATION OF WAR BY AN UNARMED COUNTRY. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT SUCH MOVE WOULD RESULT IN GREATER DISADVANTAGE THAN ADVANTAGE TO ICELAND AND URGED CAREFUL STUDY BEFORE SUCH ACTION TAKEN.

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6. GISLASON CRITICIZED VAGUENESS OF GOI POLICY ON RELATIONS WITH BRITISH AND ASSERTED THAT IT RESULTED FROM DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN CABINET WHICH NECESSITATED A COMPROMISE. LIKE THE OTHERS, HOWEVER, HE AGREED THAT IF BRITISH WARSHIP IS FOUND GUILTY OF DELIBERATE RAMMING OF ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VESSEL THEN HE WOULD NOT PROTEST AGAINST CLOSING OF BRITISH EMBASSY. IRVING

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